



Employment Labor Market Information Bulletin

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Rhode Island's Unemployment Rate Holds Steady at 4.2 Percent in March

The Unemployment Rate

Rhode Island's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for March showed no change over the month, matching February's thirteen-month low of 4.2 percent. The number of unemployed Rhode Island residents edged down by 200 in March to 21,300. A year ago March, the unemployment rate was 4.7 percent, while the unemployment level stood at 23,700. Nationally, the unemployment rate inched up 0.2 of a percentage point to 5.7 percent in March. Rhode Island's unemployment rate remains well below the national figure for the eighth straight month.

"Labor market conditions in Rhode Island remained relatively stable in March as the unemployment rate held steady at 4.2 percent," said DLT Director Dr. Lee H. Arnold. "While we feel the worst of the recession is over and are optimistic about an economic recovery, job growth in Rhode Island continues to proceed at a slow pace."

Rhode Island Job Highlights (Over the Year, Unadjusted Figures)

Jobs at Rhode Island businesses numbered 473,300 in March 2002, up 1,600 (+0.3%) from the 471,700 jobs reported last year. Although this is the smallest annual gain in the last six years, employment is at an all-time March high. Employment increases in Services (+4,500), Trade (+1,800) and Finance, Insurance and Real Estate (+1,100) offset declines in the remaining sectors, including a 5,100 job loss in Manufacturing. (Continued on Page 4)

EEOC Provides Information via the Internet

Since its inception in 1965, the goal of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has been to eliminate illegal discrimination in the workplace. This is an ongoing struggle as record numbers of discrimination charges continue to be filed.

In today's business environment, women and minorities comprise a greater percentage of the workforce and temporary, part-time and contingent employment are thriving. The EEOC has created a web site to inform both employers and employees of their rights and responsibilities under federal equal employment opportunity laws. Simply log on to www.eeoc.gov.

The EEOC web site provides questions and answers about Federal laws prohibiting job discrimination. It presents facts about sexual harassment, equal pay and compensation discrimination, age discrimination, race/color discrimination, and much more.

Employers often need detailed information to develop their affirmative action plans. The most recent Census information, featuring tables for race and ethnic distribution by geographic area, has been posted and can be accessed at: www.eeoc.gov/stats/census/index.html. Data for Rhode Island are available at the county level and for cities with over 50,000 population.

The Do's & Don'ts of Interview Questions

The law relating to what may and may not be asked during an interview is simple. Questions may not be asked for the purpose of discriminating on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, birthplace, age or physical disability. Any questions that an employer asks during the selection process must be related to the job you are seeking. This rule applies to all questions asked, whether in the application form, during the interview, or in any testing materials administered. However, either intentionally or out of ignorance, this rule is often violated. Most illegal questions are asked not out of an attempt to bypass the law, but rather out of ignorance or simply out of a desire to get to know you better. On Page 4 you'll find some examples of prohibited questions and related questions that are similar but permissible. Good interviewing techniques are an acquired skill that may take years to master. A surefire rule of thumb is, if you are unsure as to the legality of a question you are about to ask, Don't Ask It! Many unnecessary lawsuits could have been avoided if only interviewers had thought before they spoke! For more information on this topic, contact: **Employer Service Unit** (401) 462-8724

Rhode Island Labor Force Statistics*

(in thousands)

	Seasonally Adjusted			Unadjusted		
	Mar 02	Feb 02	Mar 01	Mar 02	Feb 02	Mar 01
Civilian Labor Force	507.7	508.9	504.9	504.4	505.7	501.5
Resident Employment	486.4	487.4	481.2	481.1	478.1	475.8
Unemployment	21.3	21.5	23.7	23.3	27.5	25.7
Unemployment Rate	4.2%	4.2%	4.7%	4.6%	5.4%	5.1%

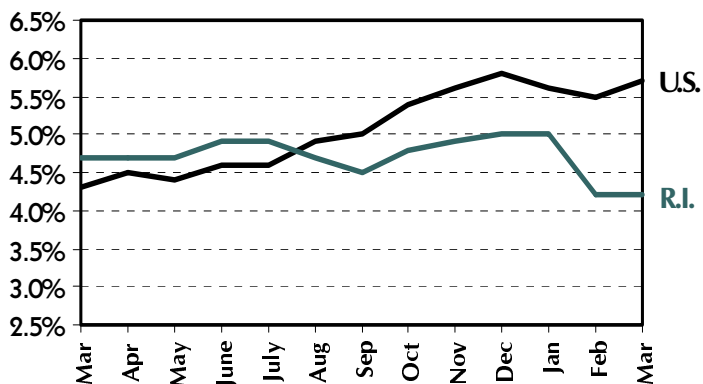
United States Labor Force Statistics

(in thousands)

	Seasonally Adjusted			Unadjusted		
	Mar 02	Feb 02	Mar 01	Mar 02	Feb 02	Mar 01
Civilian Labor Force	142,005	142,211	141,869	142,092	142,057	141,751
Resident Employment	133,894	134,319	135,808	133,433	133,349	135,298
Unemployment	8,111	7,891	6,061	8,659	8,707	6,453
Unemployment Rate	5.7%	5.5%	4.3%	6.1%	6.1%	4.6%

Rhode Island & United States Unemployment Rates

Seasonally Adjusted 2001 - 2002



City & Town Unadjusted Unemployment Rates

	Mar 02	Mar 01
Barrington	2.4	2.8
Bristol	4.0	4.7
Burrillville	5.0	5.4
Central Falls	6.9	9.5
Charlestown	5.2	6.5
Coventry	4.4	4.6
Cranston	4.0	4.7
Cumberland	4.5	5.0
East Greenwich	4.5	4.8
East Providence	5.1	5.4
Exeter	4.3	4.7
Foster	5.9	5.9
Glocester	3.9	4.0
Hopkinton	2.9	4.2
Jamestown	3.4	4.2
Johnston	5.1	5.9
Lincoln	4.3	4.6
Little Compton	4.2	4.4
Middletown	4.2	4.7
Narragansett	2.6	2.8
New Shoreham	13.0	17.9
Newport	4.6	5.8
North Kingstown	3.7	3.6
North Providence	4.0	4.8
North Smithfield	3.6	4.2
Pawtucket	5.6	6.5
Portsmouth	3.6	4.0
Providence	5.8	6.5
Richmond	2.7	2.1
Scituate	5.5	4.9
Smithfield	4.1	3.6
South Kingstown	3.4	4.0
Tiverton	5.4	6.2
Warren	4.9	4.5
Warwick	4.1	4.1
West Greenwich	4.9	5.0
West Warwick	5.0	5.6
Westerly	3.0	4.4
Woonsocket	5.9	5.8
State of R.I.	4.6	5.1

Unemployment Insurance Claims Activity

	Mar 2002	Feb 2002	Mar 2001	% Change		Year to Date		
				Feb 02	Mar 01	2002	2001	% Change
Initial Claims	6,037	8,234	7,366	-26.7%	-18.0%	23,563	27,196	-13.4%
Number of Payments	67,601	73,290	57,454	-7.8%	17.7%	217,188	180,385	20.4%
Amount of Payments (gross millions)	\$20.4	\$21.9	\$16.4	-6.6%	24.7%	\$65.0	\$51.0	27.5%
Exhaustions (Final Payments)	1,499	1,302	1,049	15.1%	42.9%	4,242	3,064	38.4%
E.S. Fund Balance (millions)	\$261.8	\$250.7	\$263.0	4.4%	-0.5%			

*Current month figures are preliminary; prior month and year are revised. Totals may not add due to rounding.

Labor Force statistics are compiled by Labor Market Information, in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Dept. of Labor.

For additional information, comments or suggestions, contact

Labor Market Information, Phone (401)462-8740, Fax: (401)462-8766, www.dlt.state.ri.us/lmi

What is "Establishment Employment?"

The establishment employment survey, conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in cooperation with state agencies, provides information on the employment, hours, and earnings of workers on nonfarm payrolls. This information is collected from employer payroll records.

- ☐ RI Establishment employment reflects the number of persons working at RI businesses. A person need not live in RI to be counted in the establishment survey.
- ☐ In the establishment survey, persons are counted for each job they hold. If a person holds more than one job in RI, that person is counted separately for each appearance on a payroll.
- ☐ Establishment employment does not include agricultural workers, the self-employed, unpaid family workers, or private household workers.
- ☐ Establishment employment does not include people on unpaid leave - vacation, labor dispute, sickness, maternity/paternity leave, etc, but does include people on paid leave.

Total Establishment Employment in Rhode Island**

	Employment (in thousands)			Net Change From	
	Mar 02	Feb 02	Mar 01	Feb 02	Mar 01
TOTAL EMPLOYMENT	473.3	470.5	471.7	2800	1600
GOODS PRODUCING	84.0	83.3	89.3	700	-5300
Contract Construction	16.4	16.1	16.6	300	-200
Manufacturing	67.6	67.2	72.7	400	-5100
SERVICE PRODUCING	389.3	387.2	382.4	2100	6900
Trans. & Public Utilities	16.6 *	16.5 *	17.0	100	-400
Trade (Wholesale & Retail)	105.3	105.1	103.5	200	1800
Wholesale	18.6	18.6	18.8	-----	-200
Durables♦	11.4	11.4	11.7	-----	-300
Nondurables♦	7.1	7.1	7.1	-----	-----
Retail	86.7	86.5	84.7	200	2000
Building & Garden Supplies♦	2.6	2.6	2.2	-----	400
General Merchandise	6.3	6.3	6.6	-----	-300
Food Stores♦	15.1	15.2	15.3	-100	-200
Automotive Dealers	7.8	7.8	7.6	-----	200
Apparel & Accessory Stores	4.3	4.4	4.3	-100	-----
Furn., Home Furn., & Equipt.♦	3.1	3.0	2.7	100	400
Eating and Drinking Places	31.4	31.0	30.0	400	1400
Miscellaneous Retail	16.2	16.3	16.1	-100	100
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	33.4	33.2	32.3	200	1100
Depository Institutions	9.5	9.4	9.1	100	400
Services	168.3	166.9	163.8	1400	4500
Hotels & Other Lodging♦	4.2	3.9	3.6	300	600
Business Services	24.9	25.0	27.4	-100	-2500
Auto & Misc. Repair♦	5.6	5.6	5.5	-----	100
Amusement & Recreation	5.0	4.8	4.7	200	300
Health Services	53.3	53.1	52.0	200	1300
Educational Services	20.3	20.0	20.5	300	-200
Social Services	16.6	16.5	16.3	100	300
Government	65.7	65.5	65.8	200	-100
Federal	10.2	10.2	10.3	-----	-100
State	18.4	18.3	18.3	100	100
Local	37.1	37.0	37.2	100	-100
Education♦	24.9	24.8	24.9	100	-----
Non Education♦	12.2	12.3	12.3	-100	-100

*Labor Dispute ♦ Publication of these industries is not approved by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

Establishment Employment, Hours and Earnings in Manufacturing Industries in Rhode Island

	EMPLOYMENT (in thousands)					PRODUCTION-WORKER AVERAGES					
				Net Change		Weekly Hours			Hourly Earnings		
	Mar 02	Feb 02	Mar 01	Feb 02	Mar 01	Mar 02	Feb 02	Mar 01	Mar 02	Feb 02	Mar 01
MANUFACTURING	67.6	67.2	72.7	400	-5100	40.2	40.2	40.2	12.27	12.30	12.15
DURABLE MFG.	44.3	43.9	48.2	400	-3900	40.1	40.4	40.3	12.09	12.13	11.96
Primary Metals	3.2	3.4	3.8	-200	-600	38.5	39.2	40.9	12.96	12.95	12.92
Fabricated Metals	7.5	7.4	8.5	100	-1000	38.5	39.6	38.8	11.70	11.73	11.31
Nonelectrical Machinery	3.6	3.6	4.4	-----	-800	41.7	42.0	41.0	13.75	13.75	13.59
Electrical Machinery	5.0	5.0	5.7	-----	-700	39.9	39.6	40.2	11.54	11.52	11.60
Trans. Equipment	3.9	3.9	3.6	-----	300	40.6	42.1	41.5	14.46	14.48	14.41
Instruments	5.2	5.2	5.4	-----	-200	41.1	41.2	41.0	12.80	12.81	12.76
Miscellaneous Mfg.	12.2	11.9	13.2	300	-1000	40.7	40.3	39.9	10.71	10.74	10.69
Jewelry, Incl. Costume	9.2	8.9	10.1	300	-900	40.6	40.1	39.9	10.49	10.50	10.50
All Other Durables	3.7	3.5	3.6	200	100	40.8	40.9	41.3	12.46	12.46	12.05
NONDURABLE MFG.	23.3	23.3	24.5	-----	-1200	40.4	39.7	40.0	12.60	12.63	12.54
Textiles	5.2	5.3	5.9	-100	-700	39.7	37.8	40.9	10.90	10.87	10.85
Printing-Publishing	5.1	5.2	5.3	-100	-200	41.4	39.2	38.7	16.63	16.62	16.62
Rubber & Plastic Products	4.3	4.3	4.7	-----	-400	39.3	39.3	39.5	13.27	13.28	13.17
All Other Nondurables	8.7	8.5	8.6	200	100	40.8	41.5	40.1	11.73	11.72	11.68

**Current month figures are PRELIMINARY. Prior month & year are REVISED. Totals may not add due to rounding.
Farmers, Self-employed, Domestic & Armed Services personnel are excluded from Establishment Employment figures.

Rhode Island's Unemployment Rate Holds Steady at 4.2 Percent in March

(Continued from Page 1)

Within the Services sector, a 2,500 job loss in Business Services was offset by increases in other sector components, the largest occurring in the "Other Services" (+4,500) component. This designation includes Engineering Services, Accounting Services, Membership Organizations, Landscape Services and unclassified employers. Substantial increases were also reported in Health Services (+1,300) and Hotels (+600). Within the Trade sector, the largest gains were posted in Restaurants (+1,400), Building and Garden Supplies (+400) and Home Furnishings (+400). These increases overshadowed job cutbacks in General Merchandise Stores (-300) and Food Stores (-200). Job losses were noted in nearly all Manufacturing industries with the largest occurring in Fabricated Metals (-1,000), Jewelry/Silverware (-900), Nonelectrical Machinery (-800), Electrical Machinery (-700), Textiles (-700) and Primary Metals (-600). In contrast, a 300 job gain was reported in Transportation Equipment.

Rhode Island Job Highlights (Over the Month, Unadjusted Figures)

The number of jobs in Rhode Island rose by 2,800 over the month as all industry segments reported a monthly increase.

Manufacturing – Manufacturing posted a net gain of 400 jobs over the month. Increases were reported in Jewelry-Silverware (+300), Other Durable Goods (+200), Other Nondurable Goods (+200), and Fabricated Metals (+100). Partially negating this increase, job losses were noted in Primary Metals (-200), Textiles (-100) and Printing-Publishing (-100). All other industry components remained even over the month.

Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers

	Mar 02	Feb 02	Mar 01	% Change Prev. Year
All Items	178.8	177.8	176.2	1.5%

Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Services – Nearly all Services industries reported small over-the-month gains resulting in an increase of 1,400 jobs for the sector. The largest gains were reported in Private Education Services (+300), Hotels (+300), Other Services (+300), Amusement & Recreation (+200) and Health Services (+200).

Contract Construction – Employment in Contract Construction was up 300 over the month as warmer weather bolstered outdoor construction activity.

Trade – Trade reported a gain of 200 jobs in March. Increases in Restaurant employment (+400) and Home Furnishings (+100) were partially offset by declines of 100 each in Food Stores, Apparel & Accessory Stores, and Miscellaneous Retail Stores.

Finance, Insurance & Real Estate – Employment in this sector increased by 200 jobs. Job gains were noted in Banking, as well as in Insurance and Real Estate.

The Do's & Don'ts of Interview Questions

(Continued from Page 1)

PROHIBITED QUESTIONS:

National Origin or Descent

That's an unusual name.
Where is it from?

Age

How old are you?
What is your date of birth?
When did you graduate?

Marital/Family Status

Are you married? Engaged?
Divorced? With whom do you live?
Do you plan to have a family? Do you have children? What are your childcare arrangements?

Personal

How tall are you?
What is your weight?

Affiliations

What organizations or groups do you belong to?

PERMISSABLE QUESTIONS:

What's your name? Have you ever worked under a different name?

Can you meet the minimum age requirements as set by law? Are you over the age of 18?

Would you be willing to relocate?
Would you be willing to travel as needed for the job? Would you be willing to work overtime as necessary?

Are you able to lift a 50-pound weight and carry it 100 yards, as that is part of this job?

Are there any professional trade groups or other organizations that you consider relevant to your ability to perform this job?

PROHIBITED QUESTIONS:

Citizenship

Are you a U.S. citizen?

Disabilities

Do you have any disabilities? Please complete the following medical history. Have you ever been hospitalized? Have you had a major illness in the last 5 years? How many days have you missed in the last year because of illness? When did you lose your eyesight? How? Are you taking any prescribed drugs? Have you ever been treated by a psychiatrist? For Drug addiction? Alcoholism?

Arrest Record

Have you ever been arrested?

Military

If you were in the military, were you honorably discharged?

PERMISSABLE QUESTIONS:

Are you authorized to work in the U.S?

Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job? Can you demonstrate how you would perform the following job-related functions? After a job offer has been made, you will be required to undergo a medical exam.

Have you ever been convicted of the following crime? (the crime named should be reasonably related to the performance of the job in question.)

In what branch of the Armed Forces did you serve? What type of training or education did you receive in the military?